*Iron ore*

* 597 *Q.*—Sri S. SOWDI SUNDARA BHARATHI (on behalf of Sri K. SATTANATHA KARAYALAR) : Will hte Hon. the Minister for Industries be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of small pilot plants that are functioning for the exploitation of the iron ore in Salem;

(*b*) the quantity of iron extracted by these plants; and

(*c*) the rate of production per ton?

The Hon. Sri R. VENKATARAMAN : (*a*) None, Sir. There is however one small pig iron plant in the private sector, functioning at Coimbatore which utilises iron ore mined in the Nilgiris district.

(*b*) This plant has an installed production capacity of 50 tons a day.

(*c*) The Government have no information regarding the cost of production of pig iron.

* 598 *Q.*—Sri S. SOWDI SUNDARA BHARATHI (on behalf of Sri K. SATTANATHA KARAYALAR) : Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the entrepreneurs in Salem and Coimbatore licensed to exploit iron ore are receiving any assistance from the State; and

(*b*) if so, the nature thereof?

The Hon. Sri R. VENKATARAMAN : (*a*) No, Sir.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Sri K. VINAYAKAM : What is the percentage of iron-content in this ore?

The Hon. Sri R. VENKATARAMAN : The ore which is used by this plant is the ore available in the Nilgiris district. It is somewhere between 48 and 50 per cent.

Sri K. VINAYAKAM : Does it prove to be an economic unit?

The Hon. Sri R. VENKATARAMAN : This particular unit does not sell pig iron at the market but utilise it for its own castings Therefore, we presume that it must be economic for the unit.

**Sri J. MATHA GOWDER:** *நீலகிரியிலே எவ்வளவு இரும்புக் கனி கிடைக்கிறது என்று சர்வே செய்யப்பட்டிருக்கிறதா? இப்பொழுது லைசென்சு வாங்கினவர்கள் தொடர்ச்சியாக எடுத்துக் கொண்டிருக்கிறார்களா? அதை அனுப்பி, பரிசீலனை செய்து, அது தேன் இரும்பா அல்லது வேறு இரும்பா என்று கண்டுபிடிக்க ஏற்பாடு செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளதா?*

The Hon. Sri R. VENKATARAMAN : Investigation regarding both the quantity and quality of the iron ore in the Nilgiris district is now being conducted by the Geological Survey. So far as the